Town of Los Altos Hills

NEWSLETTER

Volume XV, No. 1 Winter 1992

Landscape for a More Fire-Safe Home

The East Bay Hills fire last October reminded many Town residents of our own fire in July 1985. Again we have been made more aware that the fuel in our hills has the potential for devastating fires. The following advice is offered for a safer landscape and home:

- All plants can burn — there are no fire-proof plants. The more fuel the hotter the fire, so... keep in mind that plants close to the house should be kept fairly small. Large shrubs and trees against the house or under eaves are potentially dangerous. If you must plant next to your home for aesthetic reasons keep plants well pruned and well watered.
- Clean up all dead plant material within thirty (30) feet of the house; low groundcovers or ornamentals are recommended for this area.
- Trees should not overhang the roof, particularly shake roofs.
- Wood decks on hills should not have shrubs or any fuel mass planted below them. Fire usually sweeps uphill. Enclosing the lower side is also a good idea.
- A "fire ladder" can be created by planting shrubs under trees, or leaving debris where it could catch fire and ignite the tree. To avoid this, plant only low-growing plants under trees and prune off the lower limbs of the tree, creating a fire break. Thin out the plants regularly to remove fuel.
- Native wild land shrubs should not be allowed to grow too thick. Spaces between them help in a fire situations. Clearing, however, will lead to erosion problems and should be avoided.
- In general, a lot of home fire safety is a matter of landscape maintenance — watering, cleanup of dead debris, thinning and pruning of plants. Spacing of plants and selection are important but less so than keeping the quantity of fuel sparse within 30 feet of your house and below it if you live on a hill.
- If you are planning to put on a new roof, remember that shakes and shingles, when on fire, spark and fly great distances, igniting trees and other roofs. Therefore, class A roofs are recommended, even if not mandatory.
- Our Town has a free year-round garden debris recycling center on Purissima Road near the Little League fields for residents to use Wednesday through Sunday, 10–4, and four free "Dump Days" for other household debris. Check your Los Altos Garbage Co. bill for the dates.
- Street trees are to be maintained by the homeowner, but a free permit is required if any removal is to be done.

More information on fire retardant plants may be obtained at Sunset Magazine in Menlo Park, or your local nursery. Other fire safety reminders are:

- Make sure your street number is clearly visible to fire responders at the street.
- Keep driveway clear 10 feet wide and 12 feet high for emergency vehicles, and maintain a clear place for turn-around.

Environmental Design and Protection Committee

Election to be Held June 2, 1992

A general Municipal Election will be held in the Town of Los Altos Hills on June 2, 1992 to fill three City Council seats. Deadline for filing nomination papers for the City Council seats is March 6. An advisory measure in fire retardant roofing will also be on the ballot.

Please call the City Clerk's office for additional information.

Remember to vote on June 2, 1992.

Wood Smoke in the Bay Area; A Burning Issue

During the cold winter months, many of us enjoy relaxing by a fireplace or wood stove. But for all the enjoyment a fire may bring, it has some undesirable effects. Its smoke contributes to outdoor pollution and may endanger the health of those who breathe it.

Wood smoke contains carbon monoxide particles and toxic chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde and polycyclic organic matter. When the air is stagnant, as is often the case, pollution levels can build up and become unhealthy.

You can do something to help. When air quality is approaching unhealthy levels, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is asking residents to voluntarily stop burning wood in their fireplaces or wood stoves until pollution levels go down. An exception is made for the new EPA Phase II certified wood stoves, which are 90 percent cleaner than most other stoves.

If air quality is poor, a "Don't Light Tonight" message will be announced through the media, and will be carried on the Air District's air quality information number: 1-800-794-SMOG. A colorful "Wood Burning Handbook" is also available for free by calling the Air District at 1-800-HELP-AIR, or by writing to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, 939 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

"Dial Agenda"

The Los Altos Hills City Council meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 7:15 p.m. The Planning Commission meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. For agenda information after Town Hall office hours, call 941-7225.

Neighborhood Coordinators Needed

In Los Altos Hills, a system has been initiated whereby residents and officials can act as efficiently as possible in case of an emergency.

Our Town has been divided into 35 neighborhoods, each headed by a neighborhood coordinator (s), to act as liaison between neighbors and emergency officials.

So that we can effectively address the needs of all our residents, we are looking for additional volunteers to be Neighborhood Coordinators or Assistant Coordinators. Also, in order to have Red Cross Shelters available in case of a disaster in Los Altos Hills, the Red Cross requires that we have each shelter staffed by a volunteer trained in Disaster Survival, so if you can help or would like more information, please call Town Hall.

Safety Committee

Thank You for Saving Water

Los Altos Hills residents exceeded water conservation goals for 1991, saving an average of 35% per household over 1987 usage levels.

With reservoirs in Santa Clara County at less than 10% of capacity, difficulty obtaining outside supplies, and low rainfall so far this winter, residents are being asked to maintain their outstanding efforts into the future.

Household Toxics Drop-off

Residents of Los Altos Hills may now participate in the new county-wide Household Hazardous Waste Program. Opportunities to safely dispose of potentially hazardous materials will be offered 10–12 times a year. Drop-off of materials will be done by appointment to eliminate waiting in line.

Please call 408-299-7300 for an appointment and for the exact location.

More on Fire Safety

Some tips from Town Hall:

- Firefighters and Sheriff deputies ask that visible, preferably reflective, house numbers be used to help them find every home in an emergency.
- Fire retardant roofing is strongly recommended. (This issue will be on the June 1992 ballot.)
- Only use the 9-1-1 emergency call system for real emergency situations. Don't call for information during general emergencies. Los Altos Hills' 9-1-1 system is routed through the Los Altos Fire Department, so if you want a Sheriff's Deputy, ask promptly.
- Watering down roofs during fires works against hydrant pressure needed by firefighters. If fire is approaching, evacuate immediately.
- Anyone who would need special assistance in the event of an emergency should make arrangements ahead of time with neighbors. Our Town's Emergency Coordinator program will be of significant assistance to the Fire and Sheriff's Departments.
- Because only emergency vehicles will be allowed access in a fire situation, horse owners should realize that it may be difficult to remove horses by trailer. Other arrangements should be made; lead them out, or in the worst case let them loose.

Los Altos Hills Residents Receive Earthquake Assistance

Los Altos Hills residents have received substantial assistance in recovering from earthquake damage. Since the Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989, 122 residents were helped with money from the following programs:

Temporary Housing
FEMA $84,491.98

SBA (Small Business Administration)
Real Property $2,494,200.00

SBA (Small Business Administration)
Personal Property $226,800.00

IFG-State $53,265.00

Grand Total $2,858,756.98

Clean-up Days – 1992

The clean-up days have been scheduled for 1992 for residents of Los Altos Hills (incorporated area only). They will be held on the following Saturdays: March 7, June 6, September 12, and December 5, from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The locations are listed below:

- Town Hall parking lot (truck and debris box)
- Magdalena at IS 280 (truck and debris box)
- Foothill College – parking lot A (truck and debris box)
- Altamont Road at Black Mountain – Westwind Barn (truck and debris box)
- Page Mill Road at Arastradero West (truck only)
- Mora and Eastbrook (truck and debris box)

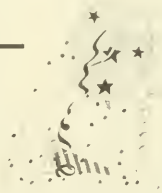
In order to verify eligibility, you will be *required* to show your driver's license to a representative of the Los Altos Garbage Company.

Debris will be accepted that is boxed, bagged, or bundled and easy to handle. Cuttings that are bundled no larger than 3' x 4' will be accepted at the truck stations only. Large loads of cuttings or debris that do not comply with the above will be unloaded by the resident at debris box locations only. This includes appliances, wood, furniture, etc.

Please note that yard waste should be taken to the Town Corporation Yard at 27400 Purissima Road Wednesday through Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For more information please call the Los Altos Garbage Company at (415) 961-8040 or (408) 993-9440.

"Sbring" in the Hills



Bring in the Hills this Spring — welcome new neighbors — see old friends and make new ones — a social function for the entire community.

Spring Party
Friday, May 8, 1992
7:00 p.m. to Midnight
Fremont Hills Country Club
12889 Viscaino, Los Altos Hills
Dress: Semi Formal
(coats & ties preferred)

Featuring
Hosted Champagne/Beverage Hour
with Hors d'oeuvres
Live, S-Wonderful
Early-evening Combo Music
A Delicious, Catered
Bar-B-Que Buffet Supper
Dine to Superb "Supper Strings"

To Be Followed By
An Evening Dance Party
with full bar facilities (no host)
Live band music, featuring
"Big Band" and "50s and 60s Pop"
Unique events and unmatched fun!

Special drawings and door prizes
And MUCH MORE!!

Community Relations Committee

Historian's Notes!

A Gift to the Heritage Preserve

In November John Bettencourt, who does rototilling, plowing, and discing in the Town, donated a wonderful old piece of agricultural equipment to our Heritage Preserve — a McCormick-Deering Mowing Machine, one horse-drawn, circa 1895, very rare. It is placed behind Heritage House, beside the vintage hay baler donated by the Taaffe family in 1983, which inspired our farming museum of agricultural equipment used in the Hills long before incorporation.

We are still looking for donations. The 1900 goose-neck wagon used in orchards and the large hayrake at the entrance to Town Hall are all part of out heritage too. Other items are still awaiting pick-up, such as old hand plows, a McCormick Seeder, and a windmill pump. An offer of a concrete roller from Esther Clark's property has been made by her nephew. We have two Fresno Scrapers used in making orchard roads; an offer of a 1900 Bean Co. sprayer rig was made by Clarence Maurer in 1983. Other donations include blacksmith tools such as hammers, tongs, and a 500 pound anvil; a milk-cream separator, ca. 1900, long-handled scythe; a 1900 water-trough; horse collars and special horse shoes.

Items used in apricot cutting and drying have been collected. The orchard of apricot and prune trees at Heritage House was planted in 1984 to show our children what grew in our hills "back in the old days." An apricot drying shed was envisioned on the Preserve, but there were not enough funds collected with which to build it. (Everything was to be donated — not paid for by the Town!) Anyone willing to help with this project — no matter how small an amount of time or money — will be greatly appreciated! Call me at 941-7222 or come to see me in the History Room in the Heritage House on Tuesdays from 1–5 p.m. I think it's about time this project is completed!

Rosemary Meyerott, Town Historian

Los Altos Hills 36th Birthday: January 27, 1992

Looking Back into History

On Tuesday, January 10, 1956, some long-time friends and neighbors eyed each other with cold suspicion as voters moved along the winding roads to two polling places, the homes of L.P. Leene, Hillview Drive, between Hilltop Drive and Magdalena Avenue, and of Irene A. Lockwood, 27231 Elena Avenue. On that rainy night polls closed at 7:00 p.m. The simple incorporation ballot was tallied and showed 424 yes votes to 339 no votes. Thus the Town of Los Altos Hills became Santa Clara County's fourteenth city (population 2,500; area 9-1/2 square miles; roads, 29 miles) by a close margin. A total 763 voters had spoken (65% of some 1,200 eligibles), plus 7 who cast absentee ballots, affording a yes vote of 54%. The official date of the Town's incorporation, allowing time for county reaffirmation, was to become *January 27, 1956*. On January 23, 1956, Los Altos Hills was officially declared a sixth-class city (one of a class of cities having a population of more than 3,300, but not exceeding 8,000).

Hills history was made with the swearing-in on January 30, 1956, of the Town's first Council: Easton Rothwell, Leighton Bledsoe, Sidney Treat, Arthur Fowle (replaced by son, John Fowle, after a heart attack), and Ted Dungan. Sidney Treat was elected Mayor and Ted Dungan, Deputy Mayor. All of these men are now deceased, with the exception of Leighton Bledsoe, who still resides in the Hills.

Rosemary Meyerott, Town Historian

Los Altos Hills employees gather to mark the Town's birthday

Schedule

of Activities

Los Altos and Los Altos Hills Chamber of Commerce

FEBRUARY 7, FRIDAY

L.A.Y.C. Jr. High School Dance
Los Altos Youth Center. #1 North San Antonio Road. Information 941-0950.

FEBRUARY 8, SATURDAY

"Salute to the Mayors" of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. Black tie optional banquet sponsored by the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce. University Club, Palo Alto. $35 per person. Res. Req. 948-1455.

FEBRUARY 8 & 9, SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Music for Minors
Charlotte Diamond Concerts. Foothill College Theater. 1:00 & 4:00 p.m. each day. Tickets $6. Information 941-9130

FEBRUARY 29, SATURDAY

Jr. High Ski Trip & Snow Board Days
Bear Valley. Sponsored by Los Altos Recreation Department. Cost $49. Information 941-0950.

MARCH 1, SUNDAY

"The Meeting"
Los Angeles Raiders vs Faculty & Students Basketball Game, sponsored by the Los Altos High School ASB and LAHS Athletic Boosters. Foothill College. 4:00 p.m. Admission $5. Information 968-6571 ext. 26.

MARCH 2, SATURDAY

TGapp Talent Attack Los Altos Youth Center
#1 North San Antonio Road. High School participants. 8:00 p.m. Admission $5. Information 941-0950.

MARCH 6, FRIDAY

L.A.Y.C. Jr. High School Dance
Los Altos Youth Çenter. #1 North San Antonio Road. Information 941-0950.

APRIL 3, FRIDAY

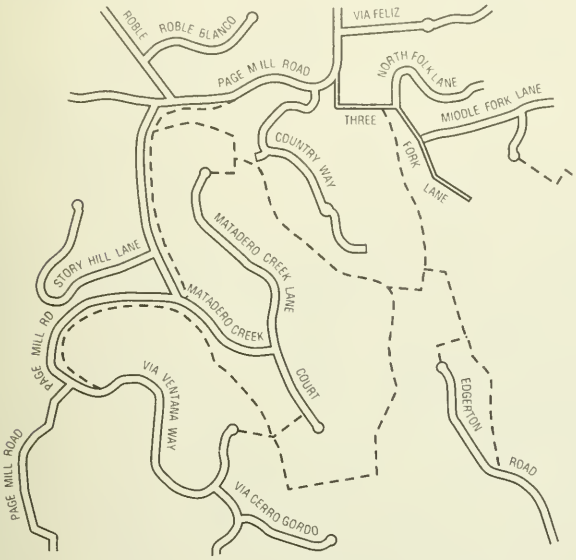
L.A.Y.C. Jr. High School Dance
Los Altos Youth Center. #1 North San Antonio Road. Information 941-0950.

Pathway Posts and Markers to be Installed

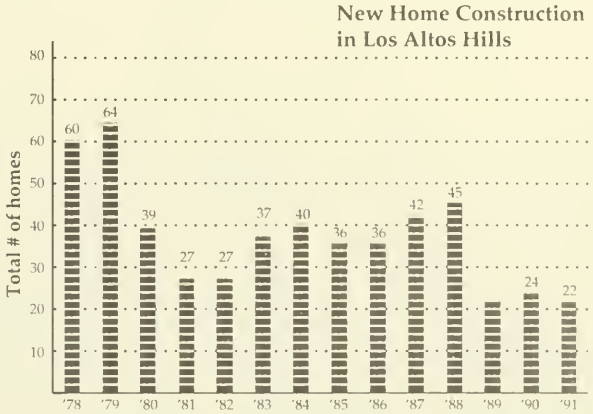
The Pathways, Recreation & Parks Committee completed its review of all off-road path easements in Town last year. At council meetings last summer and fall 19 areas of Town were studied and new path posts and markers were approved.

We hope to be featuring each area in the newsletter as the new markers are installed. All off-road easements are not designated to be signed at this time, but will be added to the list as path routes are completed.

Below is a map featuring the Edgerton and Matadero Creek off-road path routes:



Pathways, Recreation & Parks Committee



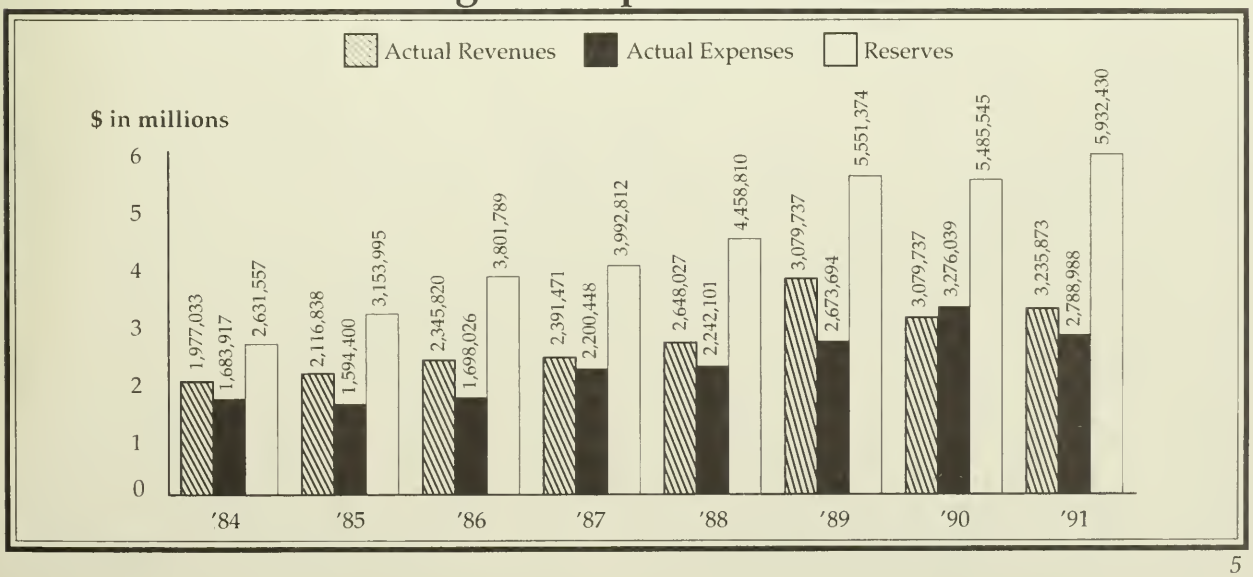
The recession has affected home building in Los Altos Hills. After an active period in the late 1980's, the past three years have seen the lowest number of new homes constructed on an annual basis in recent history.

Unsung Hero

The City Council has sent a letter commending Dr. Frank Martin for his quiet but valuable services to the Town.

Every day, Dr. Martin takes a walk somewhere in the hills. He takes along a grocery bag, or a shopping bag, or a trash bag, and fills it up with trash, before he comes home! He has been doing this for years. A neighbor of Dr. Martin wrote: "Just think, if all the retired citizens everywhere (and some who aren't) would just take that little bag with them… *we could eradicate trash!!*

Budget Recap 1984 – 1992

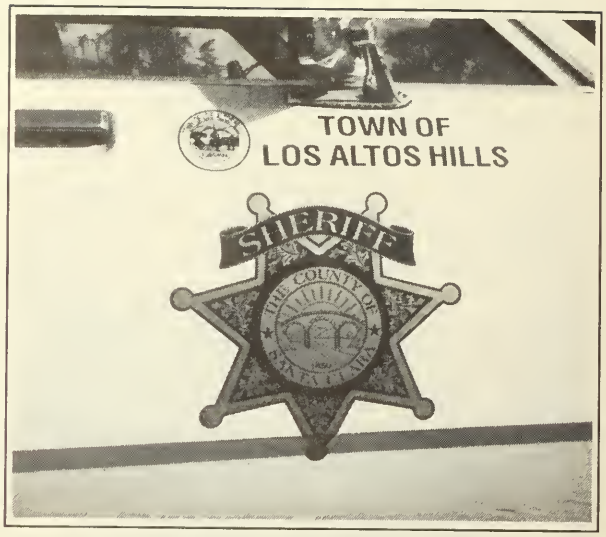


Staff Changes

Recently there have been some important changes at Town Hall. In December Bill Ekern left his position as Director of Public Works to join the Redevelopment Agency in San Jose. Bill had been with the Town for six years and he made many important contributions to Los Altos Hills. Everyone wishes him the best of luck in San Jose.

In December the Town also appointed a new Town Planner, Linda Niles. Linda had previously been an Assistant Planner with the City of Encinitas. We all welcome Linda on board and look forward to working with her at Town Hall.

Please feel free to contact any member of the Town Staff with questions or requests for assistance. Call Town Hall at 941-7222.



Town Logo on Sheriff Patrol Cars

To better define the County Sheriff's role in the four contract cities (Los Altos Hills, Cupertino, Saratoga and Monte Sereno), patrol cars have recently been customized for each jurisdiction.

Town of Los Altos Hills
26379 Fremont Road
Los Altos Hills, California 94022

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